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News Release

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Three men sentenced for sexual trafficking

Two of three defendants were sentenced yesterday in federal court in connection with operating a prostitution ring involving the transportation of both adult women and underage girls between Minnesota and Nevada.

On April 28 in Minneapolis, United States District Court Judge Richard Kyle sentenced Tivon Bandy, 34, Minneapolis, to two years in prison, and sentenced Kenwanee Tate, 31, formerly of Brooklyn Center, to 16 months in prison. Both men were ordered to serve three years of supervised release. On April 16, Judge Kyle sentenced Darryl Taylor, 43, formerly of Brooklyn Park, to 108 months in prison, along with 21 years of supervised release.

Taylor was sentenced on two counts of sex trafficking of a minor and one count of possessing documents in furtherance of sex trafficking. Both Bandy and Tate were sentenced on one count of conspiring to violate federal law by engaging in sex trafficking of children by force, fraud or coercion and the transportation of minors for purposes of prostitution.

All three pleaded guilty to their respective counts in October 2007. Bandy and Tate received lower sentences due to their cooperation in the case and other factors, Judge Kyle said. At the sentencing of Taylor, Judge Kyle noted that Taylor had been the leader of the group and had obstructed the investigation.

According to the plea agreements, the prostitution ring involved transporting women and girls between the Twin Cities and Las Vegas to engage in commercial sex acts for profit. The agreements also stated that force, fraud and coercion in furtherance of the trafficking.

The conspiracy began sometime in 1998 and operated through March 2005. The defendants would transport juveniles, some as young as 15, and young women from both Minnesota and Wisconsin to Las Vegas to work as prostitutes, escorts or exotic dancers. According to the indictment in the case, the defendants used violence and the threat of violence to intimidate the females to work as prostitutes.

The investigation began in 2004 when a detective with the Hennepin County Sheriff's Office learned that Taylor was apparently using the identity of another local man. Taylor also stole or received identification documents from the females to control them, and to allow underage girls to get jobs in strip clubs or escort services.

When Taylor was arrested in Nevada in 2005, he had more than 20 identification documents for different women and girls. In one case, a false name and age were needed so a girl could fly from Minneapolis to Las Vegas to work as a prostitute. According to the charges and one of the women who cooperated, Taylor collected the money earned by the females and controlled their access to the money.

This case was the result of an investigation by the Hennepin County Sheriff's Office, the Brooklyn Center Police Department, the Las Vegas Metro Police Department, and the Las Vegas and Minneapolis offices of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Robert M. Lewis.